

**Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Implementing Section 503 of RAY BAUM’S Act	)	WC Docket No. 18-335
	)	
Rules and Regulations Implementing the Truth in Caller ID Act of 2009	)	WC Docket No. 11-39
	)	

**COMMENTS OF COMCAST CORPORATION**

Comcast Corporation (“Comcast”) submits these comments in response to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking released on February 15, 2019 in the above-captioned proceeding.<sup>1</sup> The Commission, in close coordination with industry stakeholders and consumer groups, has made significant and laudable progress in its efforts to combat fraudulent robocalls relying on spoofed caller ID information, and the NPRM in this proceeding represents another important step towards curbing this abusive and harmful conduct. Comcast strongly supports the Commission’s proposal to shore up its ability to take enforcement action against fraudulent spoofers by amending its rules to incorporate statutory changes made as part of last year’s RAY BAUM’S Act.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in order to bolster its ability to protect consumers against bad actors, the Commission may also wish to clarify that a provider originating a call in Internet Protocol (“IP”) must transmit the calling party name when initiating a call, in addition to the calling party number that originating providers already transmit.

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<sup>1</sup> *Implementing Section 503 of RAY BAUM’S Act; Rules and Regulations Implementing the Truth in Caller ID Act of 2009*, WC Docket Nos. 18-335, 11-39, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 19-12 (rel. Feb. 15, 2019) (“NPRM”).

<sup>2</sup> *See Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018*, Pub. L. No. 115-141, Div. P, Title V, § 503, 132 Stat. 348, 1091-92 (2018) (“RAY BAUM’S Act”).

## DISCUSSION

### I. THE COMMISSION AND INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS ARE MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN COMBATTING FRAUDULENT CALLER ID SPOOFING

The Commission is commendably tackling the problem of fraudulent spoofed robocalls on various fronts, as detailed in the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau's recent Report on Robocalls (released concurrently with the NPRM).<sup>3</sup> The Commission's initiatives include an order in November 2017 authorizing voice providers to block certain types of spoofed calls,<sup>4</sup> active efforts to promote the development and adoption of the end-to-end call authentication standard known as SHAKEN/STIR,<sup>5</sup> and aggressive enforcement actions against individuals and entities engaging in fraudulent spoofed robocalling.<sup>6</sup> The Report also emphasizes that "[g]overnment, industry, and consumers have been working together to make progress" on these

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<sup>3</sup> See FCC, Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau, *Report on Robocalls*, CG Docket No. 17-59 (rel. Feb. 14, 2019), available at <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-356196A1.pdf> ("Report on Robocalls").

<sup>4</sup> See *Advanced Methods to Target and Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 32 FCC Rcd 9706 ¶¶ 10, 18 (2017) ("Robocall Blocking Order").

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, Notice of Inquiry, 32 FCC Rcd 5988 (2017) ("Call Authentication NOI"); FCC, Press Release, "Chairman Pai Calls on Industry To Adopt Anti-Spoofing Protocols To Help Consumers Combat Scam Robocalls," Nov. 5, 2018, available at <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-354933A1.pdf>. ("FCC SHAKEN/STIR Press Release"). SHAKEN (Signature-based Handling of Asserted Information Using toKENs) and STIR (Secure Telephone Identity Revisited) together refer to a framework and set of specifications for verifying and authenticating caller identification for IP-based voice calls. See *Call Authentication NOI* ¶ 5.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., *Adrian Abramovich*, Forfeiture Order, 33 FCC Rcd 4663 (2018) (imposing a forfeiture penalty of \$120 million for violations of Truth in Caller ID requirements); *Philip Roesel d/b/a/ Wilmington Insurance Quotes and Best Insurance Contracts*, Forfeiture Order, 33 FCC Rcd 9204 (2018) (imposing a forfeiture penalty of \$82 million for violations of Truth in Caller ID requirements).

initiatives,<sup>7</sup> and highlights steps that voice providers are already taking to address unlawful spoofed calls.<sup>8</sup>

Comcast has worked closely with the Commission on these efforts and is proud to be an industry leader in developing and deploying tools and techniques for mitigating fraudulent spoofed robocalls. In addition to implementing specific blocking measures authorized by the Commission in its 2017 *Robocall Blocking Order*<sup>9</sup> and offering free robocall mitigation tools to its customers,<sup>10</sup> Comcast has pioneered the development and implementation of SHAKEN/STIR—a particularly promising method of addressing fraudulent spoofed robocalls in a comprehensive and robust manner.<sup>11</sup> Comcast’s Chris Wendt co-chairs the work group of the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions on the SHAKEN framework for caller ID authentication, is a primary author of the STIR specifications adopted by the Internet Engineering Task Force, and co-chaired the Authentication Work Group of the Robocall Strike Force organized in 2016.<sup>12</sup> Comcast’s Beth Choroser co-chaired the North American Numbering Council’s Call Authentication Trust Anchor Working Group, which submitted a report to the Commission last year on the governance framework and timely deployment of the

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<sup>7</sup> *Report on Robocalls* ¶ 16.

<sup>8</sup> *See, e.g., id.* ¶¶ 18, 19, 21, 24.

<sup>9</sup> *See* Comments of Comcast Corp., CG Docket No. 17-59, at 4 (filed Jul. 20, 2018) (“Comcast Jul. 2018 Comments”).

<sup>10</sup> *See, e.g., id.* at 5 (describing Comcast’s offering of free Nomorobo compatibility with its residential voice product). Comcast also is a member of the Industry Traceback Group, whose coordinated efforts to trace fraudulent calls to their source often results in a decision to add a particular number to the industry Do-Not-Originate list.

<sup>11</sup> *See* FCC SHAKEN/STIR Press Release at 1.

<sup>12</sup> *See* Comcast Jul. 2018 Comments at 3.

SHAKEN/STIR standard.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Comcast recently announced a major milestone in deploying SHAKEN/STIR on its network. On March 5, Comcast and AT&T successfully accomplished an exchange of authenticated calls in a real-world (non-laboratory) setting using phones on the companies' consumer networks—a feat “believed to be an industry first for calls between separate providers.”<sup>14</sup> These ongoing industry efforts, in conjunction with the Commission's regulatory initiatives, illustrate the significant progress already being made in combatting fraudulent spoofed robocalls.

## **II. THE NPRM REPRESENTS A LAUDABLE STEP FORWARD AND OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENSHRINE ROBUST CONSUMER PROTECTIONS**

The NPRM in this proceeding opens a new front in this ongoing battle, and Comcast strongly supports the Commission's continued endeavors in this arena. As the NPRM notes, the Commission issued a report in 2011 identifying potential gaps and ambiguities in its existing statutory authority to take enforcement action against persons or entities that fraudulently alter caller ID information.<sup>15</sup> That report urged Congress to consider, among other things, expanding the Commission's authority to police caller ID spoofing on calls originating from outside the United States, and clarifying the Commission's jurisdiction over spoofing via text-messaging services and IP-enabled voice services beyond interconnected VoIP offerings (which the prior

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<sup>13</sup> *See id.*

<sup>14</sup> Comcast Corp., Press Release, “AT&T, Comcast Announce Anti-Robocalling Fraud Milestone Believed To Be Nation's First,” Mar. 20, 2019, *available at* <https://corporate.comcast.com/press/releases/att-comcast-announce-anti-robocalling-fraud-milestone-believed-to-be-nations-first>; *see also* Eli Blumenthal, *Fight Against Robocalls Continues as AT&T, Comcast Complete Test of Verified Call*, USA Today, Mar. 20, 2019, *available at* <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2019/03/20/at-t-comcast-say-they-making-progress-fight-against-robocalls/3215621002/>.

<sup>15</sup> *See* NPRM ¶ 8 (citing *Caller Identification Information Successor or Replacement Technologies*, Report, 26 FCC Rcd 8643 (2011) (“2011 Caller ID Report”)).

statute had already covered).<sup>16</sup> The RAY BAUM’S Act, enacted last year, amended Section 227(e) of the Communications Act to address these issues—expanding the scope of covered entities to include “any person outside the United States if the recipient is within the United States,” and the scope of covered communications to include any “voice service or a text message sent using a text messaging service.”<sup>17</sup> Comcast is pleased to see the Commission taking prompt action in this proceeding to update its Truth in Caller ID rules in accordance with these statutory amendments.

As the Commission assesses how best to implement these amendments, it may wish to consider a refinement to the proposals set forth in the NPRM in order to maximize the effectiveness of its Truth in Caller ID regime.<sup>18</sup> Specifically, the Commission should consider clarifying that a provider originating a call in IP must transmit the calling party name (also known as “CNAM”) when initiating a call, in addition to the calling party number (or “CPN”) that originating providers already transmit. As the Commission recognized in its 2011 report, many originating providers do not transmit CNAM, and terminating providers typically must rely on costly third-party databases to link CNAM to a particular CPN when displaying caller ID information to end users.<sup>19</sup> Yet when “bad actors . . . intentionally link phone numbers they control to misleading names” in services that feed these databases, the result can be just as deceptive and harmful to consumers as a spoofed number.<sup>20</sup> While the Commission’s rules

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<sup>16</sup> *See id.*

<sup>17</sup> *See* RAY BAUM’S Act § 503, 132 Stat. at 1091-92.

<sup>18</sup> *See* NPRM ¶ 39 (seeking comment on “other revisions [the Commission] should make to [its] Truth in Caller ID rules to effectuate Congress’ intent”).

<sup>19</sup> *See 2011 Caller ID Report* ¶ 13.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

already prohibit the fraudulent manipulation of any CNAM information received from *other* providers,<sup>21</sup> the Commission should consider requiring the inclusion of CNAM along with CPN in the initial transmission from an IP-based originating provider—both to reduce the risk of fraud and to minimize unnecessary costs for providers that currently must pay for access to third-party CNAM databases.

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<sup>21</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 64.1604(a) (providing that persons or entities may not, “with the intent to defraud, cause harm, or wrongfully obtain anything of value, knowingly cause, directly or indirectly, any caller identification service to transmit or display misleading or inaccurate caller identification information”); *id.* § 64.1600(c) (defining “caller identification information” as “information provided by a caller identification service regarding the telephone number of, or other information regarding the origination of, a call”); *id.* § 64.1600(h) (defining “information regarding the origination” to include any “name” associated with the call).

## CONCLUSION

Comcast appreciates the Commission's continued focus on the problem of fraudulent spoofed robocalls. The Commission and industry stakeholders have been making significant strides towards addressing this problem, and the proposals discussed above and in the NPRM will help ensure that consumers enjoy greater protections from this malicious activity.

Respectfully submitted,

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